

E. and T. Fairbanks and Company
Two Story Covered Bridge
Sleepers River
St. Johnsbury
Caledonia County
Vermont

HAER No. VT-1-A

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

VT-1-A

E. AND T. FAIRBANKS AND COMPANY TWO STORY COVERED BRIDGE

Date: ca. 1876

Location: Spans Sleepers River S. E. of Mount Vernon Street, St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

Designed by: Lambert Packard

Owner: No longer extant, destroyed in 1972

Significance: This wooden lattice truss bridge with auxillary arches was originally built in about 1876, but the second story added at a later date. The bridge, which spans Sleepers River, connects factory buildings on either side of the river, and was an integral part of the factory complex. Three gothic windows with pointed arches were located on each side of the enclosing walls. It is a rare example of a two story covered bridge.

Transmitted by: Monica E. Hawley, Historian, 1983.

-2-

In 1815, Major Joseph Fairbanks established a sawmill and a year later, a grist mill on the banks of the Sleepers River, at St. Johnsbury, Vermont. His son Thaddeus started making wagons, and, later, patented plows and stoves in the upper level of the grist mill.

In 1830, Thaddeus Fairbanks invented the platform scale, and in following years, the factory expanded as more and more space was needed to accomodate the large number of orders. Many of the buildings all on the south side of "the bridge" were destroyed by fire in 1876. The bridge had been built by the Fairbanks Company spanning the Sleepers River on what was then the main road to Danville. When the road was subsequently moved, a second story was added to the bridge and it became an integral part of the factory complex.

From 1866 to 1890 all the factory building were designed by Lambert Packard, a native Vermonter. Who later settled and practiced in St. Johnsbury. Packard's factory buildings are characterized by a heavy Gothic style and intricate brick work around the windows and capstones. The bridge was made with laminated wooden arches and a lattice truss. It is enclosed, with three gothic windows on each side. The Fairbanks Company re-located in 1967, and the buildings remained empty until 1972 when the bridge and other buildings were destroyed by fire.